

IMAGINARY SPACE IN THE JAVANESE CULTURE PORTRAYED IN GLONGGONG NOVEL BY JUNAEDI SETIYONO: CULTURAL-ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

by Sugiarti Sugiarti

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IMAGINARY SPACE IN **THE** JAVANESE CULTURE PORTRAYED IN *GLONGGONG* NOVEL BY JUNAEDI SETIYONO: CULTURAL-ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Space is culturally produced through cultural actions and interventions in a community. Therefore, a clash of meaning takes place in spaces. The act of giving meaning relies on the cultural-ecological dimension of the community invested in it. This study aims to explain (1) the facts of space presented in *Glonggong* novel, and (2) the functions of space in *Glonggong* novel that influence the lives of the characters. Both are pivotal because the Javanese view of life has cultural-ecological dimensions that are different from the concepts of perceiving reality of the space adapted by modern mankind. This study has employed a cultural-ecological approach with the emphasis on the local cultural conventions in interpreting the surrounding reality. The type of research used is qualitative using a descriptive-dialectical approach. The research data source is *Glonggong* novel by Junaedi Setiyono. The data are in the form of narrations, dialogues, thoughts, and interactions among the characters that show Javanese cultural imaginary space. The data analysis has been conducted by following the stages of data classification, data reduction, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the fact of space unites the Javanese cultural realm in the imaginary space that is built through interconnected narrative stories. Both have different interests based on the author's perspective as the creator of a literary product. This space fact refers to the position of the characters in portraying themselves in a life struggle. The function of space has an orientation on the power that dominates a thought or an action that has a positive or negative impact. Also, space has a special function for the characters in living life.

Keywords: Cultural ecology, power function, space imagination.

1. Introduction

Literature cannot be separated from culture and its various dimensions. Literary work is culture because it is a manifestation of human patterned actions. Ratna (2011, p.174)

asserts that to probe the culture of a society, its products of literature must be initially understood. Before discussing more the relationship between literary work and culture, first, it is crucial to find out the relationship between language and culture. This is because literary works are created through language. As most human activities are expressed through language, understanding the culture of a particular society means firstly understanding their language. Language and culture reflect the speakers of the language, through which values are derived from. Nursyahidah (2017, p. 608) claims that without language, culture might not exist. Language can also show ways of thinking from a particular culture by providing terms, ideas, concepts, and so on. Behaviors, thoughts, and feelings can only be understood through language. Language can also be used to show certain truths. Conversely, language can also be used to hide the fact and to lie in disguise.

Meanwhile, Ratna (2011, p. 182), showing the links between literary work and culture, postulates that the further implications of literature and culture are the attraction between the two disciplines. By giving priority to literary works, which are cultural products dominated by imagination and creativity, literary works must be returned to the public, or to the culture in which the literature originates to obtain validity and competence so that they can be understood by readers.

As one of the internal elements of literature, the setting is imaginary in nature, which in turn allows the readers to develop their imagination. Ramadhanti (2008, p. 71) explains that setting is a powerful element, to which the plot and characters are only means of explaining the influence of the setting. Furthermore, Sudjiman (in Ramadhanti, 2008, p. 69) reveals that setting constitutes statements or instructions regarding the time, place, and atmosphere of the occurrence of events. Nurgiyantoro (2010, p. 218) divides settings into two classifications, namely physical settings and spiritual settings. The physical setting is a setting that explains the place and time in a particular location. The spiritual setting, on the other hand, strengthens the presence of the physical setting in question, for example; the procedures, customs, and values.

Cultural imaginary space is a space that exists because of the creative process of the author. This space has the flexibility to introduce the whole kinds of activities, mindsets, and behavior patterns that are formed by human actions when interacting with others. These activities will be a pattern which forms a unity of meaningful habits known as culture. This is in line with the form of culture according to Honningmann (in Mashuri, 2010, p.53), who proposes three concepts of culture, namely:

- The manifestation of culture as a complex of ideas, thoughts, values, norms, regulations, and such,
- Culture as a complex of patterned activities and actions of a community, and
- The manifestation of culture is in the form of objects created by humans.

Based on these classifications, in addition to referring to the form of culture, the space of cultural imagination is also related to the elements of culture which Koentjaraningrat (1994) puts forward. These elements are formed because of the system that moves it. The system has been agreed upon by the community to produce an order that can be used as a standard in human life. Therefore, (Koentjaraningrat, 1994, p. 202) suggests seven elements of culture, namely: systems of equipment and technology, livelihood system, social systems, and social organizations, knowledge systems, languages, religions, and arts.

The cultural imaginary space is certainly still within the scope of elements and forms of culture which are important parts of the author's exploration while creating work. Cultural work that is dominated by imagination and creativity has a distinct characteristic which ultimately strives for validation and competence. Eventually, readers can understand the work well and realize that literary work must be returned to the society, or to the culture

in which the literature originates. Therefore, it can be said that the space of cultural imagination in literature finds an area that is free because it departs from the creativity of the author in placing spaces in accordance with the dimensions developed earlier. In this case, space is not limited by the partitions but occupies any cosmic sphere according to the function of the space itself.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Space in Javanese Culture

Javanese culture has its way of interpreting space in Javanese culture. Space has a meaning that is not only limited by a partition or spatial barrier, but it has important dimensions. When one is in an abstract space, one is experiencing a different atmosphere which is nothing like concrete space, and vice versa. Indeed, concrete space also has substantial meaning.

Space in the Javanese perspective is more than a phenomenon, and far more crucial than temporal order. As an illustration, *omah* is the most intensively domestic domain where its inhabitants would interact. Some activities give rise to interior formation facilities; in a broader domestic framework, *omah* is the core that forms a domestic domain, and in a broader sense is a place inherent in spatial proximity, activity networks, and understanding of collective goals. A residence for a group within a community is a culture that is formed through space. *Omah* is a reflection of Javanese people's attachment to the concept of housing, including routine and non-routine activities. Through *omah*, Javanese people have a place as a medium to actualize themselves personally and environmentally (Fajarwati, 2017, p. 124).

Javanese people's belief in cosmology affects their daily behaviors. A foundation known as the concept of cosmology seems to be a fixed benchmark. The concept affects behaviors in all aspects (Sunarmi, 2007). The interior of the Javanese house considers three aspects; beauty, safety, and peace. Beauty means aesthetic, symbolic, rich, and having a distinct identity. Considering those aesthetics means beauty, in a Javanese traditional house, despite being built on cosmological and philosophical plannings, the composition process follows a beautiful pattern.

The harmony built through the space in Javanese culture is based on the understanding that space has specific functions, which are to unify the family system and to have usability. Functions lead to the use of the space for residence. In this description, there is a system of knowledge about private space in Javanese individual's life. Based on the concept of Javanese individual, a house does not only mean a place to live but also as a source of life for the family who lives in it. This concept is visible as a part of the public knowledge system in making sense of the space around them. Since a house is a place to live as well as a place for the family to gather, the Javanese house illustrated in this novel does not have clear boundaries between the living room and the family room. The breadth of the yard that functions as a garden where trees grow with various fruits and as the children's playground shows the concept of kinship (*saduluraan*) in Javanese society. It is notable, however, that the concept of space and its implications as a manifestation of this philosophical view of Javanese kinship is more commonly found in lower social class societies, especially farmers. In the family of farmers, children are known to be very close, and the concept of living with cousins in one household is often very common (Koentjaraningrat, 1994, p. 112).

2.2 The Representation of Cultural-Ecology in Literature

Literary works related to culture are also closely related to the theory of representation. Endraswara (2013, p. 28) suggests that representation is a depiction of an object in literature. Another term for representation is an image. Literature portrays human life because individual and collective selves need to be revealed in a reflective form, which gives birth to a cultural phenomenon called reflexivity. Representation refers to the reflected power behind a phenomenon; while reflexivity refers to how the anthropology of literature lures, feeds and defines representation.

Anthropological literary studies can reveal cultural imagery in literature. The issues of the image of female leaders, laborers, *priyayi* (nobles of the robe) culture, the image of farmers, and others are some of the focuses on this research. Representations appear in various symbolic actions and can represent reality. Representation is an image revealed in representations, including (a) the dramatic appearance of the character through dialogues and literary descriptions; (b) facts of tradition setting or place of worship; (c) natural, social, multicultural interactions, and so on. Therefore, researchers of literary anthropology need to choose good literature, namely works that represent a variety of cultures in a complete manner, which means culture is not just a tradition nor an art, but the whole process and work as well as human actions (in Endraswara, 2013, p. 29). Cultural capital means that the reflection of the life of people possessing the capacity to act makes them able to carry out various activities by thinking and working. Also, cultural capital naturally is given or inherited to the next generation. It becomes a tradition that can be seen and felt. Cultural capital can be used as a form and can influence the nature of the culture's supporters (I Made Purna in Kumbara, 2012, p 53).

Indonesia and art, especially the traditional ones, aesthetically show symbols that reflect world views, religious beliefs, cosmology, and other cultural values. In this case, art in various patterns and expressions is an expressive symbol that aesthetically expresses meaning, message, or cultural values (Triyanto, 2014, p. 36)

In the context of human relations with the environment and culture, humans cannot be separated from the order of value in society. The order of values is represented through the synchronization of thoughts, words, actions, and participation in activities involving the members of the community. Furthermore, this activity is used as a guide in behaving in accordance with established cultural values.

Glonggong by Junaedi Setiyono is one of the historical novels with Javanese settings which presents facts of imaginary space built through the interactions of the main character, *Glonggong*, with other characters. The imagination provides an understanding of the behavior of the characters in physical space and other spaces. The cultural imagination serves as an action that derives from interaction among groups of people resulting in a social construct that can be positive or negative.

Departing from the above points, the problem of this research is to examine: the facts of the imaginary space in Javanese culture and the function of the imaginary space in *Glonggong* novel by Junaedi Setiyono. Both of these are important because the facts will give a clear picture; while the function refers more to actions that have positive and negative impacts, as well as mystical.

3. Method

The research uses a cultural-ecological approach with a focus on the local community's cultural conventions in interpreting the surrounding reality. The study is qualitative research that employs a descriptive-dialectical approach. The data source is a novel entitled *Glonggong*

written by Junaedi Setiyono. The data are in the form of narrations, dialogues, thoughts, and interactions among the characters; all of which show the imagination of space in Javanese culture. The data have been collected through analysis of texts (novels) in the form of sequences/story narratives that have relevance to research problems. This study is descriptive, investigating the subject based on the facts of the imagination of cultural space in the novel by linking the study of journals and relevant books. Data analysis has been done by classifying data, categorizing data, and finding important issues related to the study of imaginary space in Javanese culture. In addition, it is also supported by interactive-dialectical analysis to track the overall findings, so that the accuracy of the results can be maintained.

4. Findings and Discussion

The facts of space and function of space cannot be separated from each other. Both are always mutually connected in a single entity to manifest into meaningfulness. Javanese ecology literature offers a variety of environmental aspects, such as the cultural, natural, and social environment. Historical conditions often lead to the making of the meaning of literature (Endraswara, 2016, p. 188).

The fact of imaginary space in Javanese culture tends to lead to problems experienced by the characters. This is related to the author's efforts in describing the facts of imaginary space in Javanese culture from the problems faced by the character due to the cultural environment that influences it. The tendency that occurs is the fact that imaginary space in Javanese culture is inseparable from the socio-cultural background that forms a unified imaginary space that cannot be avoided.

4.1 Facts of Javanese Culture's Imaginary Space in *Glonggong* by Junaedi Setiyono

The facts of imaginary space in Javanese culture have a connection with space that is marked physically and space that is in nature. The author creates an imaginary space in Javanese because the author is originating from Java. Accordingly, it is easy to unite the Javanese cultural realm in the space for imagination that is built through literary works.

A socio-cultural setting is a description of anything related to the social life of a community in a fictional story. Social settings play a role in determining whether a background, especially the setting, is extraordinary, typical, or neutral. In other words, to be typical and functional, the description of the location must be accompanied by a description of the social settings, behaviors, and social life of the community in a certain place in question. The socio-cultural background will affect the characteristics of the character, or the character's characteristics will be formed by the social life within which the character is raised (Nurgiyantoro, 2010, pp. 253-254). The socio-cultural background is manifested in the characters, the social system, customs, views of society, art, and cultural objects revealed in literary works (Pradopo, 1984, p. 254).

Javanese culture has a source of value formation that comes from internal and external sources. Internal sources are the results of discovery, invention, and innovation of value systems, social systems, and new material systems. Meanwhile, external sources are the results of the assimilation of culture, religion, and such into Javanese culture which is then filtered, distilled, adjusted, and harmonized in such a way that it is integrated (Lombard, 1996; Simuh, 1995 in Saryono, 2011, pp. 11-12). These three systems manifest themselves in a way of thinking or thought that opens up new spaces for creative exploration.

The imaginary space in Javanese culture can be traced through profane thoughts or ideas and imagination to digest what is captured by the sense of sight, which is then processed into a thought or idea to produce a new one. Therefore, it can be said that art is different from

its natural reality. Imagination is an image that is produced by a person's brain. In this case, the space for cultural imagination is a space related to Javanese culture that has contributed to building a new world through literary work.

The way the author describes the character's sense of not belonging due to the uncomfortable situation at home can cause curiosity in readers. The culture that develops in the sphere of family and the lack of familiarity between children and parents are also thought-provoking issues. Physically, the house is the place where members of the family meet and communicate with each other. However, it turns out that what happens in the family is the opposite.

"I recall why I didn't stay at home for long. My ignorance was probably because of my mother. I think my mother was too quiet. My mother always looked sad with her eyes swollen like she was crying. ...Rama that I didn't know much about, only came sometimes. His arrival was also unpredictable. And usually, he stayed in the room with mom more. I rarely talked to him" (Setiyono, 2007, p.5).

The thing that causes the narrator does not feel belong at home is the atmosphere of the house. It is not as desired, no peace nor love. The house where members of family mingle are gone. The situation has changed and the narrator's mother is always quiet and never communicates. From the look on her face, the mother is always sad as if she were burdened, despite the fact the mother is a descendant of a respectable family as shown by the last name she inherited. This is described in the following quote.

"My mother was a Raden Ayu from the Tegalrejo area who was married to a *Jagabaya* from the Bagelen area. The marriage did not last as long as my parents wanted ... the reason was that my father disappeared" (Setiyono, 2007, p.12).

The separation between the narrator's father and mother has left a bitter memory. The father's departure which is not known causes the mother to often lose in her thoughts. The mother's sadness can be captured through the eyes, as they never show happiness. She tends to keep quiet even though there are others around them. In this case, the mother conceals her problems. It is common to find in Javanese culture that Javanese women tend to keep secrets of themselves and their families. This can be thought of as a woman's way to cover the family's disgrace.

"Among the signs on my mother's face that I still understand most are her eyes. The eye is the real face of a mother. Without seeing her eyes, I find it hard to say whether my mother is grieving or in her normal mood. I've never seen my mother's eyes rejoice. I've never heard my mother talk for a long time. As I recall, only once did my mother say a word to me in quite long and continuous words" (Setiyono, 2007, p. 13).

The narrator only talked to the mother once and that became a historical record for the narrator. The cultural imagination built in the story is that Javanese women tend to keep quiet when something happens to them. This is related to the Javanese cultural tradition in which everything that happens within the family must be confidentially maintained to stay within the family. This is in line with Saryono (2011, p. 105) who suggests that every Javanese individual must develop the maturity of the soul by way of feeling and through mindfulness. Therefore, Javanese individuals must be able to control their desires. The claim is confirmed by the following quote:

"My haven is Suta's house. I became diligent in reciting the *Koran* after the time of *Isha*" (Setiyono, 2007, p. 36).

Space can bring characters to positive activities. *Glonggong*'s departure to Suta's house can bring positive influence because religious activities make him calmer and this can be seen as a manifestation of spiritual values from the perspective of Javanese culture. From this, it can be said that when a person experiences problems, the right escape is to be closer to God.

4.2 The Function of Javanese Culture's Imaginary Space in *Glonggong* by Junaedi Setiyono

The function of the cultural imaginary space leads to positive and negative activities/behaviors. Space is closely related to its inhabitants and their characters. *Glonggong* reveals the characters' deceits through their actions and behaviors. In this case, the author tries to explain the function of cultural space from phenomena/problems in negative and positive behaviors. Although the positive depictions in this analysis are only minimum, it suffices to illustrate that in *Glonggong* the reality is told as it is.

As explained in the previous discussion, the facts of cultural imaginary space are oriented to the power that dominates a thought or action that has positive or negative impacts. The function of the cultural imaginary space is as a means to reflect on various events experienced by characters. In this situation, the character will carry out various activities that function to move him to make the best decisions. In the Javanese language, the term for such behavior is known as *ngajeniwongtuwo* (respecting the elderly).

"I have intended to keep my mouth shut, I will not deny anything Kiai Ngali accuses me of. *Glonggong* has become my name. *Glonggong* is a papaya leaf stalk. Papaya leaves have the benefit of making relief in the stomach. Because I support the leaves that can relieve people, I also have to be able to make a relief. Let Kiai Ngali scold me so that he could be relieved" (Setiyono, 2007, p. 74).

The function of positive cultural imagination was carried out by *Glonggong* in responding to what was conveyed by Kiai Ngali. This illustrates the importance of the function of respect for the elder. *Glonggong*'s attitude is a commendable behavior which should be upheld when dealing with the elders. Although *Glonggong* was a young man and he was scolded, he remained silent. This consideration was made so that Kiai Ngali felt satisfied by what he accused of *Glonggong*. This thought is inspired by the philosophy of papaya leaf stalks that can make the benefits of relief in one's heart so that it does not cause conflict.

"With a new weapon, Surya seems to have new energy. The new *Glonggong* (papaya stalk weapon) is weird. When it collides with my *Glonggong*, as durian collides with cucumbers, my bark is always melting. If you happen to touch my shoulder or arm, it feels like it is being beaten with a stick of wood. I then blinked back and avoided the attack" (Setiyono, 2007, p. 21).

The function of cultural imagination carried out by Surya is a negative attitude because he uses a different tool when dealing with *Glonggong*. The difference in the tools used in the cultural game will have an impact when playing *Glonggong*, the game of which equipment comes from the papaya leaf stalks which is easy to destroy. The cultural imagination revealed is the cunning way chosen by Surya to defeat *Glonggong* by using a different quality tool. The

cultural imagination that is built reflects the Javanese viewpoint that cheating is a bad deed implicating negative social activities.

“I have been robbing people since a long time ago, stupid! Just because of the ignorance of the people in the country, I can get lost while continuing to live full by eating their rice,” Kang Danar widened his grin.

“If I return the items, you will ask me to return Ki Sena’s life to your father,” he said firmly (Setiyono, 2007, p. 185-186).

The thoughts and attitudes of Danar have a negative function because the habits carried out are not in line with the values upheld in society. He tends to harm others by robbing them. This habit makes other people despise him and even he killed Ki Sena. The cultural imagination that is built into his life is that he feels satisfied when he succeeds in harming others. This negative habit tends to be repeated over and over because it has become one with him. Humans like this have died in life (*matisahroninghidup*) as revealed by Suseno (1993, p. 117).

Likewise, Danar always behaves deceitfully towards the Diponegoro group by robbing foods from the Diponegoro army. He is said to be a wicked man because of his intelligence in disguising for the sake of enriching himself.

“I have run around carrying rice from the Dipanegara army.” His face bowed.

“I heard you were robbed while on the road.” That was what I heard.

“Not exactly like that. I worked with Danar. You must know him. Yes, a wicked man who was nicknamed Dasamuka or the Lord of Ten Faces because of his cunning disguise” (Setiyono, 2007, p. 275-276).

The excerpt above illustrates that one’s bad habits will become one’s culture because they have been ingrained in the brain. In turn, the idea system is represented through a social system that will produce negative behavior. Social interaction that is built leads to dominant power that determines everything related to human actions.

“Prayitna has been widely known as the personal guard of Mr. Resident of Yogyakarta. Lately, his behavior has worried his boss, killing the farmers for no apparent reason. Mr. Resident wants to vindicate his name. “

“So I have to claim to be the killer of the peasants?”

“Yes, that’s how it is” (Setiyono, 2007, p. 222).

The function of cultural space is directed to an activity that leads to negative behavior. Prayitna’s behavior is troubling the community because he committed an act that harmed others. In the perspective of Javanese culture, this is contrary to the concept of death in life, meaning the actions taken are no longer in line with decent values. On the other hand, the vindication carried out by the Resident is a bad deed because he tried to cover up Prayitna’s mistakes. Even more striking is having another person to take the blame for Prayitna’s mistakes. This is a bad deed that Javanese would call *naboknyilihtangan* (pass the buck) hurts others. This reality contradicts the Javanese cultural values which teach Javanese individuals to show obedience and respecting others.

5. Conclusion

Facts of space mostly refer to traditional space reflecting the emotional state of the character. The character's thoughts in certain spaces give significant effects on the character's existence which is signified by the habit of singing (*nembang*). Javanese traditional singing as a fact of Javanese cultural imaginary space perpetuates a peaceful effect on the listeners. This fact of space refers to the character's position in playing the role in life.

The function of space orients on the power which dominates a thought or an action which has both positive and negative implications. Spaces inhabited by the characters with negative thoughts can create a social system that nurtures negativity. Furthermore, space has specific functions for the characters in living their lives.

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